

House Bill 953

By: Representatives Mitchell of the 88th, Smyre of the 135th, Stephens of the 165th, Howard of the 124th, Frazier of the 126th, and others

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

1 To amend Article 1 of Chapter 1A of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated,
2 relating to general provisions relative to early care and learning, so as to require annual safety
3 inspections of day-care centers, family day-care homes, and group day-care homes; to require
4 record keeping of annual inspections; to provide for legislative findings; to provide for
5 related matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

6 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

7 **SECTION 1.**

8 WHEREAS, the licensed child care centers in the State of Georgia play an integral role in
9 preparing students for school and the future and are an intricate part of our society, our
10 economy, and the livelihoods of working parents; and

11 WHEREAS, in 2002, the National Survey of American Families reported that at least 42
12 percent of children under age five spend at least 35 hours per week in child care, and for
13 full-time working mothers, this figure increased to 50.6 percent. These findings solidify the
14 need for increased safety measures in the child care setting; and

15 WHEREAS, without ongoing monitoring, it is extremely difficult to evaluate the safety
16 measures taken by licensed child care center operators. Annual in-house safety checks and
17 record keeping can lead to a better understanding of a center's effort to protect the children
18 who are entrusted in its care; and

19 WHEREAS, it is of critical importance that accurate data be collected, maintained, and
20 reviewed by the state's child care regulatory agency during annual inspections or at any other
21 time as necessary; and

WHEREAS, in-house child care safety records show the center's effort to ensure the safety of its children, and record keeping could prove vital to both the center and the state regulatory agency in the event of adverse issues affecting children; and

WHEREAS, the state regulatory agency recommends that child care centers plan, prepare, and practice disaster drills to benefit the safety of the children; and

WHEREAS, to ensure children are afforded an opportunity to thrive injury free through the child care age, it is of critical importance that safety remains at the forefront of all child care centers.

SECTION 2.

Article 1 of Chapter 1A of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to general provisions relative to early care and learning, is amended by adding a new Code section to read as follows:

"20-1A-19.

(a) Each day-care center, family day-care home, and group day-care home shall annually, during the second week of July, perform a self-inspection of its program facilities. The director of the program shall keep an annual record of such self-inspection and shall make such annual record available for review by the department upon request. Such annual record may include any receipts or documentation from third parties that have addressed any identified deficiencies.

(b) Such annual self-inspection shall include:

(1) Changing the batteries in all smoke and carbon dioxide detectors;

(2) Inspecting all vehicle tires;

(3) Planning, implementing, and practicing at least once during the school year all disaster drills and evacuation plans;

(4) Inspecting facility electrical outlets for coverings and cord exposure;

(5) Inspecting playground equipment for possible wear and tear damage;

(6) Inspecting furniture for continued stabilization and good working order;

(7) Confirming that a first aid kit is available and sufficiently stocked in each room;

(8) Inspecting furniture and equipment to ensure that they are in good repair, including checking for broken toys and accessories and identifying rugs and carpets that are wrinkled or in disrepair;

(9) Inspecting window blind cords to ensure that they are adjusted to prevent strangulation; and

57 **SECTION 3.**
58 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.

SECTION 3.

58 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.